

Married Harriet Steele 1858 Salt Lake. Endowed March 21, 1863.

Married Mary Ann Sawyer March 21, 1863. Salt Lake Endowment House. Died December 23, 1902, Midway.

Margaret Ackhurst, daughter of Edward Ackhurst and Elizabeth Wildish.

Born October 15, 1831, at Faversham, England. Married John Watkins May 4, 1851, in England. Endowed March 21, 1863, Salt Lake Endowment House. Died February 14, 1905, Midway.

Harriet Steel Watkins, daughter of John Steel and Maria Woods. Born December 5, 1841, at Haverly, Stafford, England. Married John Watkins 1858, Salt Lake City. Endowed March 21, 1863, Endowment House. Died March 11, 1884, Midway.

Mary Ann Sawyer Watkins, daughter of Joseph Sawyer and Henrietta Tranham. Born August 17, 1848, at Swansea, Wales.

Married John Watkins March 21, 1863, Endowment House.

Died April 22, 1918, Salt Lake City, Utah.

John Watkins had seven brothers and one sister.

The Watkins were a family of means and property. Architecture and building was a profession handed down from a long line of ancestors. It was natural that John should be trained in his father's profession as an architect and builder. He had a very fine voice and had musical training. He was a soloist in the cathedral. The family belonged to the Church of England.

John married at the early age of 17 to Margaret Ackhurst of Faversham. They moved to London where he readily found work at his trade. There he met the Elders of the LDS Church and was converted to Mormonism. He and his wife Margaret were baptized in 1852 by Elder William Eastone and confirmed by George Denise in the Finsbury Chapel, London, England. His mother, a faithful member of the Church of England, became very bitter towards John when she found he had joined the Latter-day Saint Church. His father died and he was left to settle the estate as well as take care of his own financial affairs before he could leave England. He made great sacrifices in order to dispose of his property that he might emigrate to America. Finally, he and his wife Margaret and their two children sailed from Liverpool on the sail ship "Horizon" May 26, 1856, with 856 passengers all of the Mormon faith bound for Boston.

Edward Martin was captain of the company. These emigrants reached Boston June 28, 1856, and traveled by boxcar to Iowa, the outfitting point for that year's emigrants. They built hand carts of green, unseasoned wood with wooden axles and boxes which caused much trouble later on. The provisions which were very meager were pulled on the carts and some small children rode. Everyone old enough or strong enough had to walk and help pull the carts. Edward Martin was captain of the company with Daniel Tyler assisting. John Watkins was bugler.

They left Florence, Nebraska July 26, 1856, and after a tedious journey full of incidents of suffering hardship, freezing, exposure and starving and running into an early snow storm, they were met by a relief company sent out by President Brigham Young. It was a sad chapter in Church history. About half of that company lost their lives. What was left arrived in Salt Lake City November 30, 1856.

That same year he moved to Provo where in that growing community he was in great demand as a builder and also because of his musical ability. In December, 1856 the first brass band in Utah was organized and he was called to be the leader. They played at the first Territorial Fair in Salt Lake.

He donated a lot of time and talent on the old LDS Tabernacle in Provo. In 1857 he built Provo's first opera house as well as stores, homes and other buildings.

He bought and owned the first organ in Provo and south of Salt Lake. It was hauled to Provo by ox team. As it was easy to lift around, it became a community organ. Whenever there was an entertainment, it was loaded on a wagon and taken to accompany the singers and sometimes to churches and funerals as well. When the family moved to Provo Valley, it served the same purpose and popularity.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was advocating plural marriage at that time, and John Watkins with his great faith and testimony was willing to obey the Church leaders. He was a great friend of Thomas Alsop. At their home he met Harriet Steel and they were married in Brigham Young's office in 1858. Later when the Endowment House was completed, he took his wives, Margaret and Harriet, to be sealed to him, and also at that time married his third wife, Mary Ann Sawyer, March

21, 1863. After the ceremony they returned to Provo where the three women and their families lived together in one house.

In the summer of 1865 the Watkins family left Provo, a fast growing and thriving community, and entered the Provo Valley with all their possessions to face the hardships and pioneering of this more remote section.

At this time the family consisted of John, his three wives, and eight living children. All three women had a small baby in long clothes, as was the style for babies in that day. Mary Ann's baby, Joseph, was born July 10, 1864. Harriet's baby, Arthur, was born October 22, 1864, and Margaret's baby, Alfred, was born November 13, 1864. They settled in the lower settlement on Snake Creek.

Later when Indian troubles forced the settlements to move together at the public square called Fort Midway, the Watkins family also moved there.

After the peace treaties with the Indians the people of Fort Midway began moving out of the fort; but instead of moving back to the old settlement, they began building their homes close to the fort. This became the town of Midway.

John Watkins secured two pieces of land, one a block south and east of the fort where he built a rock house with three apartments for his immediate needs. The other piece of property was a block east of the fort. Here he began to plan and build the house of his hopes and dreams. He located the clay, made the brick, sawed out the sandstone blocks, and built the first brick house in Wasatch County in 1870.

He built other homes in Midway similar to his own: one for George Bonner, Sr., one for William Bonner, one for George Bonner, Jr., one for William Coleman and several in Provo and Springville.

On July 27, 1869 John Watkins was called to preside over the Charleston Branch and was ordained a Seventy. March 30, 1872 he was ordained a High Priest. He never moved to Charleston, but traveled back and forth, which at that time was very difficult as there were no bridges. During high water the mules would have to swim the river and the water would come into the carriage bed. He became strongly attached to the Charleston people during the seven years he presided over the branch.

At a conference held at Heber City July

JOHN WATKINS AND WIVES



John Watkins, son of Thomas John Edward Watkins and Sarah Jordan.

Born April 13, 1834, at Maidstone, Kent, England.

Married Margaret Ackhurst May 4, 1851, England. Endowed March 21, 1863.

Add
John
Watkins
to

Singer
&
organ player

